



Date: May 17, 2011

To: Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager
Through: Theodore L. Voorhees, Deputy City Manager
From: Mark D. Ahrendsen, Transportation Director
Joel V. Reitzer, Jr., General Services Director

Subject: Agenda Item – NC 55 and US 15-501 Landscape Agreements

Executive Summary

The City has requested that the N. C. Department of Transportation (NCDOT) allocate \$236,681 in available landscape funds to implement enhanced landscaping for the completed NC 55 and US 15-501 widening projects. In accordance with NCDOT's Landscape Planting Policy, the improvements may be implemented only if the local jurisdiction agrees to perform the necessary on-going landscape maintenance. The administration recommends that the City Council authorize the City Manager to execute landscape maintenance agreements to provide enhanced landscaped plantings at the I-40/NC 55 and I-40/US 15-501 interchanges and corridors to benefit these gateway entrances to the City of Durham. The agreements are attached.

Recommendation

The City Department of Transportation and General Services Department recommend that the City Council authorize the City Manager to execute the R-2906 C (NC 55) and the U-4009, U-4012 & B-3450 (US 15-501) Landscape Agreements with the N. C. Department of Transportation.

Background

NCDOT allocates a portion of each new construction project budget towards enhanced landscape improvements. The allocated amounts are set as a percentage of either estimated or final construction costs in accordance with NCDOT's Landscape Planting Policy. For the NC 55 widening project (R-2906C), between Sedwick Road and Cornwallis Road, the available landscape budget is \$64,836. The US 15-501 widening project (U-4012), the US 15-501 Service Road relocation project (U-4009), and the Garrett Road bridge replacement project (B-3450) have a combined available landscape project budget of \$171,845. The available landscape budget allocations and landscape implementation are subject to the request of and on-going maintenance by the City.

Under an existing separate agreement, NCDOT and the City have agreed to provide and maintain enhanced landscaping at five key interchanges along the I-40 corridor. These interchanges are: I-40/NC 55; I-40/Fayetteville Road; I-40/NC 751; I-40/NC 54, and I-40/US 15-501. These landscaping improvements are funded with up to \$447,903 in landscape

funds allocated from the completed I-40 (I-3306B) widening project. Upon developing the project landscape plans, it was determined that the available funds were insufficient to provide the expected level of landscaping. Landscape budget allocations were then requested for the NC 55 and US 15-501 widening projects to supplement the funds available for the I-40 corridor interchange landscaping project.

Issues and Analysis

The NC 55 and US 15-501 Landscaping Agreements will provide enhanced landscaping at the I-40/NC 55 and the I-40/US15-501 interchanges. This will supplement I-40 landscaping provided under the separate I-40 Landscape Agreement. Under the terms of the proposed agreements, NCDOT will develop the landscape plans and specifications in accordance with the State's standard landscaping policies and procedures for highways. The plants will include deciduous shade and flowering trees and evergreen coniferous and broadleaf trees. The final plans must be approved by the State and the City before planting. NCDOT will prepare the landscaping sites and furnish the plantings in accordance with the project plans. All plantings will be located within the public right-of-way.

During the one-year establishment period, NCDOT will be responsible for the landscape maintenance. At the end of this one-year period, the City of Durham's General Services Department will assume all maintenance responsibility, including watering, mulching, pruning, fertilizing, weeding, pest control, mowing, and replacing plant materials. NCDOT anticipated completing the landscape improvements in the fall of 2011. The City's maintenance responsibilities would begin as early as the end of 2012.

Alternatives

- City Council authorizes the City Manager to execute NC 55 and US 15-501 Landscape Agreements with NCDOT, providing \$236,681 toward enhanced landscaping at the I-40/US 15-501 and I-40/NC 55 interchanges and corridors; or
- City Council does not authorize the City Manager to execute the NC 55 and US 15-501 Landscape Agreements and forgoes \$236,681 in enhanced landscaping at the I-40/US 15-501 and I-40/NC 55 interchanges and corridors. Landscaping will be completed to the degree feasible under the existing NCDOT I-40 Landscape Agreement.

Financial Impact

Provided current staffing levels are maintained in the Landscape Services and Urban Forestry Divisions, the City should have the capacity to maintain the proposed plantings with the recommended addition of two FTEs to the General Services Department budget in FY 2013. This will be necessary to meet the maintenance obligations under the terms of the City's existing I-40 Landscape Agreement. The additional FTEs would include one Equipment Operator and one Senior Laborer at a total cost of \$72,078. Additional herbicide, fertilizer, mulch, replacement trees and water would need to be added to the Landscape Services budget to maintain the trees. The estimated cost for these materials in fiscal year 2011 dollars is \$24,599. There is no City cost for design, installation, landscape materials or maintenance for the first year.

SDBE Summary

NCDOT municipal agreements require that their contracting procedures be followed for these projects. The Department of Equal Opportunity/Equity Assurance did not review this item for compliance with the Ordinance to Promote Equal Business Opportunities in City Contracting.

Attachments

NCDOT R-2906 C (NC 55) Landscape Agreement

NCDOT U-4009, U-4012 & B-3450 (US 15-501) Landscape Agreement